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## William C. Nelson to Maria C. Nelson (8 May 1863)

William Cowper Nelson

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Head Quarters Posey's Brigade,  
Near Fredericksburg, Va., May 8<sup>th</sup> 1863,

My Dearest Mother;

Another great battle  
has been fought and won, by the Army of  
Virginia, and all is quiet again, along the  
Rappahannock. It would be almost impos-  
sible to give a full account of the great  
events which have taken place within the  
last week; yet I will endeavor to give  
you some idea of the main events.

The enemy first effected a crossing on Wednes-  
day, at a point about two miles below  
Fredericksburg, and also at Germanna bridge  
on the Rapidan river, some twenty miles  
above town; the main body of the enemy  
crossed at the latter point, and advanced  
down towards Fredericksburg. The two  
brigades at United States Ford, Mahon's  
and Posey's were ordered to meet them



at Chancellorville, a point on the plank road, between Fredericksburg and Culpeper C. H., about 2 miles from our Camp. The two brigades, went to Chancellorville, Wednesday evening, but were ordered to fall back on the following morning, as it was understood that the enemy largely outnumbered us, they having 15 Army Corps. We accordingly retired about five miles towards Fredericksburg, and remained there until Friday morning, the enemy having followed us, but having made no attack, on Friday morning Jackson came up, and we immediately commenced an advance, Posey's brigade taking the lead, nothing more than skirmishing took place to-day, but we drove the enemy back some two or three miles. There was heavy skirmishing again on Saturday, but not until Sunday morning did the great battle commence in earnest, Jackson having gone around their right flank attacked them in the rear, while our



portion of the Army advanced on their front, and succeeded in driving them out of their almost impregnable breastworks. The victory was complete, our Brigade alone captured over 800 prisoners; but affairs were not so prosperous <sup>on</sup> our right, Barke's Brigade, outnumbered and overpowered, were ~~dis~~compelled to fall back, and the enemy succeeded in gaining Marye's Hill, and captured six pieces of the Washington Artillery. The heights were recaptured however the next morning, and the enemy discomfited and beaten back at every point, have again ignominiously recrossed the Rappahannock, and taken up their old quarters, where they will probably remain for some time to come. Their loss is variously estimated at from ~~at~~ ~~from~~ 20,000 to 30,000, it will certainly not fall short of the former estimate, our loss is about 6,000 or 7,000, in my opinion it is the greatest victory of the war, several of their Generals are reported to have been killed.



among them, Maj. Gen. Sickles, Howard  
and Slocum, all of them Corps Commanders.  
The large brick hotel which bears the name of  
Chancellorsville was burnt during the battle,  
it had in it some 2 or 300. wounded Yankees  
among them, Brig. Gen. S. Williams, Hooker's  
Adjutant General, who with the greater por-  
tion of the wounded were burnt to death,  
The Woods also were set on fire by our  
shells, and a great many wounded  
Yankees lost their lives in this manner.

My old friend and club-mate, Oscar Stuart  
was killed in the charge upon Mary's hill,  
he was one of the noblest boys I ever knew,  
you will doubtless recollect him, as he has  
been with me, at home.

Solon Whittington who formerly stayed with  
Mr Falconer was also killed, these are all  
of your acquaintances who fell in the late  
battle.

The Weather is beautiful now, warm  
and clear, it seems like summer, al-  
though it is only within the last week  
that the trees have assumed their summer  
dress, the Woods do not yet look green,  
My health continues excellent.

Love to all friends, Does Mrs Clark  
ever hear from her relatives at Dickson?  
Good-bye, Your devoted Son  
Will. C. Nelson